

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
MONTANA INDIAN EQUITY FUND
FY 2013 GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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APPLICATION PERIOD:
September 10, 2012 – November 26, 2012

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

MONTANA INDIAN EQUITY FUND

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR FY 2013 INDIAN EQUITY FUND PROPOSALS

A. SUMMARY

There is a serious lack of owner's equity available for Native American business owners on the reservations and among the Indian population of Montana. Owner's equity is defined as the amount of monies invested by the owner in his or her business. Unlike non-native small business owners, traditional forms of equity from home ownership, family and friends are often not available to the Indian business owner due to widespread poverty. The Montana Indian Equity Fund is a grant to assist a current Native American business or a new Native American business owner. Because of the fund's ability to offer these grants to be used by the recipient for equity, the fund is able to play a unique role in assisting in the growth of Native American small business. This money can be used for a variety of activities such as the purchase of new equipment or the development of a new product line. The fund requires a minimum of dollar to dollar match (\$1:\$1) which may include collateral such as cash, in kind, or loan funds such as a tribal loan fund, a micro loan program, or a commercial lender. Examples of in kind match may include inventory, supplies, equipment, tools or vehicles that are part of the activity of the business. In order to determine the success of the program, those businesses that receive funding will be required to provide financial information regarding their business as requested to the Department.

Existing business owners must show how the funding will support growth in their business either through the development of a new project or with the existing business strategy. This growth must be described in the narrative, financial information (such as leases, contracts, invoices or vendor quotes), and financial projections.

New business owners must show how the funding will support the success of their start up idea. This must be described in the narrative, financial information (such as leases, contracts, invoices or vendor quotes), and financial projections.

In fiscal year 2013, the Montana Department of Commerce, as recommended by the State Tribal Economic Development Commission, will provide two grants of \$7,000 each to the seven federally recognized Indian Reservations and the Little Shell Tribe. In addition, two \$7,000 grants will be available to "at large" enrolled members living off the reservation. Applications will be accepted beginning September 10, 2012 and will remain open until November 26, 2012. All

applications will be considered on a competitive basis. Applications will be recorded with date and time received by the Department and reviewed in order of receipt. **Applications considered incomplete or ineligible will be returned to the applicant and their placement on the list of received applications will be removed.** Applications that are not typed will not be accepted. Receipt of an application does not imply a commitment for funding from the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC). Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and appropriateness with state and program requirements. Applications will be reviewed by a local review committee and the State Review Committee.

The Indian Equity Fund grant review process is extensive. Each application is reviewed by the program manager and every applicant is given an opportunity to provide additional information for their application. The local review committees are composed of volunteers in each of the communities. Several weeks are required to read and coordinate the ranking of applications. The local review committees make a recommendation to the state review committee who then forward their recommendations to the Director of the Montana Department of Commerce. While it is intent of the program management to have funding available as soon as possible, for business planning purposes, do not expect funds to be available before April of 2013.

1. Eligible Applicants

The funds are available only to enrolled members of Montana's federally recognized tribes in Montana and to enrolled members of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa. All applications must include documentation of tribal enrollment in the form of a Certified Indian Blood (CIB) Form or tribal ID.

The funds are available to applicants residing on or next to the seven Indian reservations in Montana and members of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa residing in Montana as determined by each of the local review committees. Two additional slots are available to Montana enrolled tribal members living at large in Montana.

2. Eligible Uses of Funds

Funds can be used for the kinds of activities usually funded by a commercial lender. These activities may include but are not limited to:

- Purchase of land, building and equipment.
- Purchase of assets including furnishings, equipment and technology.
- Selected use of working capital for business operations.

The release of funds to the grantees will be made based on the following requirements:

- Purchases in amounts greater than \$1,000 will be paid directly to the vendor by the Department.
- Purchases in amounts less than \$1,000 will be paid from vendor receipts submitted to the Department by the grantee.

3. Ineligible Activities

The following activity will not be funded:

- Reimbursement for activities completed prior to contract award.

4. Maximum Funding and Required Match

In fiscal year 2013, the Montana Department of Commerce will provide two grants of \$7,000 each to the seven federally recognized Indian Reservations and the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa. In addition, two \$7,000 grants will be available to “at large” enrolled members living off the reservation. The business owner must provide a match on a 50-50 basis that must be firmly committed by the time the funds are released. Firm loan commitments, such as funds borrowed from a local bank, are acceptable forms of match. Collateral from the business owner, either in cash or in kind (for example inventory or equipment), is an acceptable form of match. The funds requested and the proposed matching funds must be documented in the application.

B. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Applications for FY 2013 will be accepted beginning September 10, 2012 (post mark date), by the Montana Department of Commerce-hereafter referred to as the Department. All applications received by the end of the day on November 26, 2012 (post mark date) will be considered on a competitive basis. Applicants are encouraged to submit their application earlier than the deadline.

Local Review Committee

The application process will include a review by a local review committee and a state review committee. After submission to the Department, the application will be reviewed by the local review committee composed of members from the local business and business development communities. The local review committee will include a member of the State Tribal Economic Development (STED)

Commission if available or a member appointed by the STED Commission member. The committee will include at a minimum one reviewer who is a professional lender. Recommendations of the local review committee will be forwarded to the state review committee.

State Review Committee

A final review will be made by a state review committee. A majority of the state review committee will represent state programs that understand and work closely on Native American economic development issues.

The Committee will be composed of:

Lesa Evers, Acting Director, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Heather Sobrepena-George, Program Manager, Indian Country Economic Development, Montana Department of Commerce
Jason Smith, Program Manager, State Tribal Economic Development Commission, Montana Department of Commerce
Philip Belangie (Non-voting member), Program Specialist, SBDC Entrepreneur Development, Montana Department of Commerce

The state review committee will meet to review policy and application requirements and make recommendations on the local review committees' recommendations prior to final approval by the Director of the Montana Department of Commerce.

The following five criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals for potential funding.

1. Quality of the application
2. Business experience of the applicant
3. The financial projections
4. The marketing plan
5. Quality of the match

Financial Need: The fund is designed to assist the new business start up and the small business that is growing. If either the local review committee or the State Review Committee finds the applicant has sufficient wealth (business and/or personal assets) that would allow the applicant to easily access funding through a commercial lender, local economic development organization or other gap financing, either of the committees may deny the application as outside the scope of the program.

Limited Funding: Program funding is very limited. If there are other grants or loan programs that may be utilized by the applicant this may impact the final

award of a contract. For example there are loan programs available through the Farm Service Agency at Rural Development United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Montana Department of Agriculture.

Applicants that have previously received an Indian Equity Grant will rank less competitively than other applicants who have not received a previous award.

The documentation will be reviewed under the following criteria:

The documentation required for the fund is similar to the criteria required by a bank for a commercial loan. Please provide information on the following:

- a. A business description that outlines the nature of your business, describes the product or service and its market, and identifies its customers and competition.
- b. A personal profile that outlines the background and experience of each of the principals in a resume.
- c. A proposal that states the fund request and its purpose.
- d. A business summary (including a marketing plan) that outlines the business strategy for the next three years. This will aid the committee in determining whether the business will generate the cash flow needed to operate the business. (Include a three year cash projection.)
- e. If a loan is included in the match, a repayment plan that proposes to repay the loan or outlines a repayment schedule. (This will be shown by line item in the above three year projection.)
- f. Supporting documentation that includes copies of pertinent papers that support the information contained in the application proposal. For example, a lease, contracts, invoices, vendor quotes or letter of reference.
- g. Documentation of enrollment in a Montana federally recognized tribe or the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe. Documentation will be either a Certified Indian Blood (CIB) Form or tribal ID.
- h. Outline the collateral that the business will use to secure the payment of the loan or as part of the match requirement. Collateral can include either personal or business assets: For example inventory, equipment, accounts receivable, real estate and automobiles.
- i. Financial statements both personal and business.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit a completed application supporting documentation. **An original and four copies of the application are required. Please submit the original application and the copies to:**

**Philip Belangie
Montana Department of Commerce
1121 East Broadway, Suite 134
Missoula, MT 59802**

Applicants may address any questions regarding the application or the Indian Equity Fund to:

Philip Belangie
(406) 721-3663
Email: pbelangie@mt.gov

C. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDING

The funds will be dispersed by the Department. Funding will only be made with the final approval by the Director of the Department of Commerce.

D. BUSINESS ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

To assist the applicant in the preparation of the application there are two resources available. This assistance does not include preparing the application for the applicant—it is essential that business owners understand their business. The assistance is twofold: (1) One on one business counseling, and; (2) Business management classroom training such as the *Indianpreneurship*, *NxLevel* or the *FastTrac* courses. These courses are offered throughout Montana. Attached in Exhibit II are the organizations providing technical assistance or classroom business education in Indian communities, organizations providing business assistance in the Indian communities, and the Small Business Development Centers.

Exhibit I

FY13 Montana Indian Equity Fund

Applicant Certification and Contact Form

The Applicant hereby certifies that:

ACCEPTANCE OF THE FUND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The applicant will comply with all requirements established by the Montana Department of Commerce and applicable State laws, regulations, and administrative procedures.

The applicant accepts the terms, conditions, selection criteria, and procedures established by the Montana Department of Commerce – Indian Equity Fund Process and expressly waives any statutory or common law right the applicant may have to challenge the legitimacy and propriety of these terms, conditions, criteria, and procedures in the event that the applicant is not selected for an award of funds.

APPLICANT - CERTIFICATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information provided in this application and in the attached documents is true and correct.

Name _____

Title _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Phone Number _____

Contact Person for Further Information:

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Fax Number _____

Amount of Equity Funds Requested \$ _____

Exhibit II

Organizations Offering Business Assistance on the Reservations

Blackfeet:

Browning Community Development Corporation, Joe Bremner,
joe.bfcc@yahoo.com. (406) 450-8214

Native American Community Development Corporation, Butch Conway,
blc7693@yahoo.com; (406) 338-2992 or (406) 229-0380

Crow:

Crow Economic Development Corporation, Yolanda Good Voice;
yolandao@crownations.com. (406) 638 3733

Flathead:

S&K Holding Company, Inc., Steve Clairmont, steve@skholdingcompany.com.
(406) 883-4317,

Lake Country Community Development Corporation, Carol Cunningham,
cunningham1carol@yahoo; (406) 261-3200

Fort Belknap:

Opportunity Link, Inc., Barb Stiffarm, bstiffarm@opportunitylinkmt.org; (406)
265-3699 or 1 877-332-3699;

Fort Peck:

Fort Peck Community College, Thomas L. Black Eagle, TBlackEagle@fpcc.edu.
(406) 768-6336 and (406) 650-6320.

Great Northern Development Corporation, Lorene Hintz, SBDC Director
sbdc@gndc.org; (406) 653-2590

Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa:

Warshield Economic Development Corporation, James Parker Shield,
jpsshield@hotmail.com (406) 671-3377

Northern Cheyenne:

Chief Dull Knife College Extension Program, Henry Thompson,
henry@cdkc.edu. (406) 477-6215 extension 123

Rocky Boy's:

Opportunity Link, Inc., Barb Stiffarm, bstiffarm@opportunitylinkmt.org. (406)
265-3699 or 1 877-332-3699;

Small Business Development Centers and Native American Development Corporation:

Billings:

Big Sky Economic Development Authority, **Rebecca Hedegaard**, SBDC Director, rebecca@bigskyeda.org and **Beth Allen**, SBJA Business Advisor, beth@bigskyeda.org. (406) 254-6014.

Native American Development Corporation, **Taffy Lafferty**, Loan Manager, tlaffety@wtp.net (406)259-3804

Bozeman:

Montana CDC, **Sean Becker**, SBDC Director, seanb@mtcdc.org, (406) 728-9234 ext 250.

Butte:

Headwaters RC&D, **Julie Jaksha**, SBDC Director, jjaksha@headwatersrcd.org. (406) 782-7333

Colstrip:

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation, **John Sisson**, SBDC Director, sbdc@bhwi.net, (406) 748-2990

Great Falls:

Great Falls Development Authority, **Rebecca Engum**, SBDC Director, regnum@gfdevelopment.org. (406) 453-8834

Havre:

Bear Paw Development Corporation, **Joe LaPlante**, SBDC Director, jlaplant@bearpaw.org. (406) 399-1557

Helena:

Montana Business Assistance Connections, **Dan Anderson**, SBDC Director, danderson@mbac.biz. (406) 447-1510

Kalispell:

Flathead Valley Community College, **Chris Parson**, SBDC Director, sbdc@fvcc.edu. (406) 756-3836

Missoula:

Montana CDC, **Amita Patel**, SBDC Director, amita@mtcdc.org and **Denis Blackstun**, SBJA Business Advisor, denisb@mtcdc.org. (406) 728-9234.

Wolf Point: *Great Northern Development Corporation*, **Lorene Hintz**, SBDC Director, sbdc@gndc.org. (406) 653-2590.